

do nothing, but he still employs men and natural means just so far as such agencies will avail. When Jesus called Lazarus to life he put forth divine power; human effort and natural means were inadequate; the work was too high for men, only God could perform it. But when he would have the stone rolled from the door of the sepulcher, or when he would have Lazarus freed from the entangling grave clothes, he directed the disciples to do it because it was a work commensurate with human ability. He might have rolled the stone away by the exercise of divine power, but it seems to have been his plan of work to do nothing by super-natural means that could be accomplished by natural ones. He used his divine power sparingly. He was able to walk upon the water, but there is only one instance recorded in which he did so; he went from place to place on the shores of the Sea of Galilee in the fish boats of his disciples. He preferred to suffer hunger rather than employ divine power in the miraculous creation of food, and but twice is there mention made of his having used his power to satisfy the hunger of his followers. He turned water into wine once, but after the marriage feast at Cana there is no record of his ever having done so again. He did not put forth his power to gratify the curiosity of his friends, nor to overthrow his enemies. He wrought no miracles capriciously, nor was he wasteful of the omnipotent energies at his command. Why it was so I do not know, or why he employed human means and efforts to secure that which he might so easily have accomplished by calling to his aid divine power, I do not know. But this was the method of his work, and it has always been so. The super natural is called into requisition only when the natural is inadequate; God's arm is stretched out when the arm of flesh is too weak. Human skill, human intellect, human effort must be relied upon to work out all human problems that are solvable by such means, for God does for us only what we cannot do for ourselves. It is well for us to pray and to depend upon God, but it is useless for us to expect God to answer our prayers when we hold in our hands the power to answer them ourselves. A practical son heard his pious father ask the Lord to relieve the suffering of his poor neighbors and said: "Father, give me the keys to the cellar and the smoke-house and I will answer your prayer."

It is right to pray God for an abundant harvest, for he only can give the increase, but such a prayer is worse than useless if we refuse to plow and sow and cultivate for the harvest. It is so with spiritual work. Up to the full measure of our ability, but never beyond it, our success, our development and growth depends upon our own efforts, and when we have reached the limit of human power, then God takes charge of the work. It is good to ask God to enlarge the boundaries of Zion, to increase the church in numbers and usefulness, but that part of the

work which he has committed to men must be performed by us. To pray for a revival and not work for it is as illogical as to pray for a harvest and not plow or plant for it.

I do not mean that God is limited to human agency, but it is a well attested fact that he employs human agency in every case in which such means will avail. When he heals the sick it is not by the direct intervention of super-natural power, but by blessing ordinary remedies and means. It is not an evidence of any lack of confidence in God when you consult a physician when you are sick, or when you seek the safest place you can find in a storm. It shows rather your acquaintance with God's plans and your submission to the divine conditions when you do faithfully what you can and lovingly trust him for the rest. God works in us to will and to do of his good pleasure.

FEETWASHING IN THE GOSPEL

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Is footwashing a command, or a method of teaching a great central truth of Christianity; a truth that may be as successfully taught by some other method? This is a question that many sincere hearts have wrestled with. Could the essential doctrine of humility be as well taught or indicated in some other way? My answer is, if it could have been so taught, Jesus our God-sent Savior would have found and employed some other way. His infinite wisdom would have seen, and appropriated the best way. He doeth all things in the best way. Did our Savior design it as an ordinance that should be observed by the church? We believe he did. We therefore observe it.

1 Jesus commanded us to do so. John 13: 13 15. "If I have" "ye ought." The language is strong, and positive, and is reinforced by the "I" example, "that ye should do as I have done to you." Granting that the cause that led the Savior to perform, and command the lowly act was the dispute among the disciples as to who "should be greatest in the kingdom of heaven," we may logically maintain, that so long as the same cause exists, the same remedy that divine wisdom prescribed, and commanded, must be the heaven appointed remedy now. I would not be understood as implying that the act is the remedy in the case, but rather the measure by which we may determine the spirit that is in us, and our fitness for the holy calling; the true greatness in the sight of God. Does the same cause exist to-day? Is there strife in the efforts to obtain the higher, and more honorable positions in the churches to-day? Are there class distinctions, and social distinctions, and wealth distinctions in the church now? If so, then "Feet washing" is in the true church also. "For where sin abounded, grace did much more abound," says Paul. The ordinance of Footwashing is an ordinance of grace and sanctification. "Except I wash"—"thou hast no part with me." It breaks down

distinctions, destroys caste, the curse of all the old world religions.

The rich and well-to-do have no monopoly on that fantastic inconvenience called pride, that may better be styled, self conceit; the poor have it also. It is the curse of the race. "Deny self, and follow me." Does that mean thru the upper room? Does it mean thru poverty? Yes some of us at times feel even in this nineteenth century, that it means also, to Calvary, with its cross of ignominy. But thank God, if so, that cross has been sanctified by the blood which was sprinkled on its posts; the passover that avails for the salvation for all. Feetwashing is close to the "bread and wine" of fellowship. Close to the "supper," that looks forward to the coming of the King. Feetwashing, The Lord's Supper, The Christian Communion; a cluster of heavenly graces, and no one has any right to take any of them out of the church.

2 Our second reason for believing that Jesus designed it as an ordinance to be kept by the church, is its place in history. It has a place in history given it by those who as Paul says "knew Jesus only and him crucified." 1 Cor. 2: 2. We may not dispute the proposition that the Apostle knew better the mind of the Master than the ablest exegete of the century in which we live. Paul places it in the catalog of saintly graces. Touching impecunious "widows" who may be supported within the "fellowship of the saints" by the church, the Apostle says after enumerating all the "good works" as duties, that are incumbent on all Christians, he includes "feetwashing." If she have washed the saints' feet." Here it was a work among the saints. Some tell us that it was a world custom of hospitality of those days. This we deny. Had it been a universal custom, the Apostle would not have mentioned it in the case of the poor widow, making it a test of her right to support from the church. See 1 Tim. 5: 9, 10. Then I have given the matter some investigation in ancient history, and fail to find where it was ever a custom indicative of hospitality, among any race or people. There is no argument in the statement, for the statement has no basis in fact. On that point the ancients did not differ materially from the customs of the world of our day. Making provisions for the cleanliness and comfort of travelers, and strangers with the bath, pretty much as we do now. The numerous mention made by the early Christians in their writing, of the ordinance of footwashing, is sufficient proof that it was observed by them as a Christian ordinance. The limits of this article will not permit me to quote them, but I will mention the names of authors of the very early centuries, who mention it as observed by the Christians whose writings I have before me. To wit: Ireneus, Clement, Tertulian, Origen, Shrysostum, Jerome, Usebius, and numerous others. All of which plainly shows that had it been a common custom of the world, or